

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
February 20, 2002
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

The meeting of the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) was called to order on February 20, 2002 at 10:05 a.m. at San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board Room, 401 B Street, San Diego, California.

Members Present: Rod Diridon, Chairperson
Jerry Epstein
Fran Florez
William E. Leonard
T.J. Stapleton

Members Absent: Leland Wong, Vice Chairperson
Ernest A. Bates
Ben L. Hom
Joseph E. Petrillo

Approval of Minutes for January 16, 2002 Meeting

Chairperson Diridon presented the minutes for approval. Member Stapleton moved to approve the January 16, 2002 meeting minutes. Member Leonard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 5-0.

Chairperson Diridon presented a plaque to John Fowler in honor of his service as a Board Member of the Authority from 9/30/97 – 1/4/02. Mr. John Fowler thanked the Authority for the recognition and wished the Board well.

Chairperson Diridon announced the presence of the San Diego Regional High-Speed Rail Task Force. Escondido Mayor, Lori Pfeiler, serves as the Chairperson of the San Diego Regional High-Speed Rail Task Force. Mayor Pfeiler expressed her appreciation for the Authority meeting in San Diego today and extended an invitation to the Board to return at anytime.

Julianne Nygaard, Carlsbad City Councilmember, Chairperson of North County Transit District, and Chairperson of the Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego (LOSSAN) Joint Powers Board is a Member of the San Diego Regional High-Speed Rail Task Force. Councilmember Nygaard expressed her support of the high-speed rail project.

Gary Gallegos, Executive Director of SANDAG, welcomed the Authority and encouraged the Board to return to San Diego in the future.

Authority Members' Meetings for Compensation

Chairperson Diridon presented the list of meetings for compensation. Member Epstein moved to approve the list. Member Stapleton seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

Members' Report

Chairperson Diridon welcomed a new Board Member of the Authority, Fran Florez. Member Florez is currently a Councilmember of Shafter and additionally serves as Mayor Pro Tem. Member Florez was appointed to serve as a member of the Authority by the Senate Rules Committee.

Member Florez thanked Chairperson Diridon, Authority Members and Executive Director Morshed for the warm welcome and orientation she received. Member Florez expressed her enthusiasm for the high-speed rail project and her role as a Board Member of the Authority.

Chairperson Diridon reported on the progress of the Authority's project. He stated the Authority has five individual program EIR teams dedicated to the five different corridors and one project management team. After two years of research and work in their respective corridors, the consultant teams presented the data to the Authority staff, resulting in staff recommendations which were presented and voted on by the Board from November 1991-January 2002. The Authority is currently concentrating on the narrowed alternatives which will ultimately lead to the selection of a single route, grade and set of stations in each corridor. The draft EIR/EIS is anticipated to be produced by June of 2003. The project is currently on schedule. Chairperson Diridon reported on the Authority's funding cycle.

Member Epstein stated the board will sorely miss John Fowler. He stated John Fowler contributed greatly to the progress of the project. He has proved to be an asset to the Authority and will continue to be an asset to SANDAG.

Member Leonard welcomed the newly appointed Member, Fran Florez. Member Leonard expressed how appreciative the Board is for all of John Fowler's contributions to the high-speed rail project.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Mehdi Morshed welcomed and congratulated the new Authority member appointed by the Senate Rules Committee, Fran Florez. Executive Director Morshed expressed his appreciation to John Fowler for his contributions to the Authority, including his leadership and advice in policy and administrative issues. Executive Director Morshed reported the Authority has exhausted its financial resources and therefore, most of the work of the program EIR teams has ceased, with the exception of the work being done in the LOSSAN corridor in connection with the agreement with Caltrans.

Executive Director Morshed reported the documentation for the Federal Railroad Administration funding grant has been forwarded to the California Department of Finance. It is anticipated the next phase of work will start sometime in May, 2002. This work will concentrate on the completion of the technical studies, which includes the identification of all constraints, and extensive consultation with communities and interest groups. The technical studies should be completed by the end of 2002. The next phase will be the draft EIR/EIS which is anticipated to be complete by late Spring of 2003. The final EIR/EIS document should be completed by the end of 2003.

Executive Director Morshed reported Governor Gray Davis did include all of the money the Authority requested in the Governor's proposed FY 2003 State Budget. The proposed budget has to be approved by the Legislature.

The \$8.5 million budget request was based on what the Authority felt was needed to prepare the draft EIR/EIS document. The \$8.5 million the Authority requested does not include funding for the following items:

1. Preparing an implementation plan;
2. Preparation of a shared-use Strategy;
3. A detailed review of growth & economic impact;
4. New ridership & revenue forecast;
5. Route refinements using Quantm system;
6. Statewide outreach (beyond the public participation requirements for the EIR/EIS)

San Diego City Supervisor Pam Slater

Supervisor Slater commended the staff of the Authority for their knowledge and ability to reach out to the public. Supervisor Slater stated Executive Director Morshed and Deputy Director Leavitt are particular assets to the Authority. Supervisor Slater stated she is in accord with keeping the project on schedule.

Chairperson Diridon requested the Board request the Authority staff to define the amount of funds needed for the six items not covered in the current budget, plus some contingency funds for unforeseen requirements in the coming year and provide this information in a document that may be forwarded to State and Federal Officials. Member Leonard suggested Chairperson Diridon personally meet with U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Norm Mineta and California State Secretary of Business, Transportation & Housing Maria Contreras-Sweet on this matter. The Board agreed to provide direction to staff to prepare a document with the purpose of securing additional federal funding for the 2003 fiscal year in order to conduct studies and activities that are not directly related to the environmental clearance and therefore are not funded within our budget request.

Los Angeles-Orange County – San Diego Corridor Update

Executive Director Morshed commended Deputy Director Dan Leavitt for his dedication to the high-speed rail project and his work with the coastal communities. Executive Director Morshed expressed his appreciation for the efforts of SANDAG and stated he looks forward to the continued progress of the San Diego High-Speed Rail Task Force. Deputy Director Leavitt presented background information and a brief overview of the work being done in the LOSSAN corridor. Executive Director Morshed pointed out the Authority is working in partnership with Caltrans in the LOSSAN corridor and Caltrans will be using the technical studies. Executive Director Morshed directed attention to Steve Schibuola Project Manager, IBI Group. Mr. Schibuola presented an update of the work being done in the LOSSAN corridor in connection with the agreement with Caltrans to the board. Deputy Director Leavitt summarized “where we are going” in the LOSSAN corridor. Patrick Merrill, Caltrans, Division of Rail, gave an overview of the current status of the project in the LOSSAN corridor. Patrick Merrill also announced upcoming Caltrans Scoping meetings for their Los Angeles-San Diego Rail Corridor program EIR/EIS process.

Deputy Director Leavitt called upon various local agencies that have critical roles in the ownership, right-of-way, planning, operation and maintenance of existing and future services within the LOSSAN corridor. The following representatives presented an overview of their respective agencies in relation to the LOSSAN corridor:

- Ron Scolara, Amtrak
- Martin Minkoff, North County Transit District
- Brian Sheehan, Metropolitan Transit Development Board
- Ralph Hicks, Port of San Diego

Talgo Presentation

Jean-Pierre Ruiz delivered a presentation on Spain's progress in high-speed rail and TALGO train technology to the board as an information item.

Public Comment

Richard Phillips, City of Encinitas

Mr. Phillips expressed his appreciation for the Authority's outreach efforts. Mr. Phillips stated the coastal act must be respected and adhered to in the process of the high-speed rail project. Some of the factors to be considered in the City of Encinitas are revitalization of downtown Encinitas; visual and noise impact; geo-technical evaluation; and hydrology.

Daniel Brown, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Mr. Brown reported the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service does not have Internet access. Therefore, he requested that hard copies of the documentation are provided to the Sacramento office point of contact.

Mr. Brown suggested the Authority start scheduling and coordinating meetings with combined resource agency representatives in order to alleviate possible concerns regarding the Caltrans-FRA LOSSAN program EIR/EIS.

Dennis Manning, Fresno Area Residents for Rail Consolidation

Mr. Manning welcomed Member Florez to the important work of the Authority. Mr. Manning reported FARRC would be writing to the Governor requesting a second Board Member, representing the San Joaquin Valley, be appointed to the Authority. He expressed support for locating a rail maintenance facility in the Fresno area.

Ted Wright, City of Bakersfield

Mr. Wright expressed the City of Bakersfield's support of the high-speed rail project and emphasized the City's desire for continued involvement with the project. He also expressed the City's support of a downtown Bakersfield site.

Identification of Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next Authority Board meeting is scheduled March 20, 2002 in San Francisco, California.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:51 p.m.